

Officers' Quarters, Drum Barracks
1053-1955 Cary Avenue
Wilmington District of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County, California

HABS No. CAL-353

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, California

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PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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OFFICERS' QUARTERS, DRUM BARRACKS

Wilmington District of Los Angeles
Los Angeles County, California

ADDRESS: 1053-1955 Cary Avenue, Wilmington
OWNER: Thomas J. Kaveney
OCCUPANT: Vacant
USE: Proposed Historic Monument and Civil War Museum

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Officers' Quarters and nearby Powder Magazine of Drum Barracks are all that remain of the Federal Army Post built in Wilmington in 1862 to protect Union interests in the Southwest - mainly as a supply depot. It was in continuous use until about 1868 when all troops had been withdrawn. The building, in excellent condition and with no major alterations, closely follows its early form, a late Greek Revival style with the hipped roof of the earlier Federal style and the brackets of the emerging Tuscan style. During the Civil War the building was used as the southwestern terminus of the telegraph line, linking California with the East.

In 1927, the Officers' Quarters was marked by the Rudecinda Parlor #230, Native Daughters of the Golden West. It was registered as State Historic Monument #169 in 1935 and in 1963 was submitted to the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Board as an historic monument by the Southern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects. The Board accepted this recommendation on June 7, 1963.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

When the Civil War broke out, the population of Southern California, then as now characterized by great cultural diversity, was of mixed

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loyalties. In 1860, the voters in the Los Angeles County had given John C. Breckinridge, the extreme pro-slavery Democratic candidate in the four-sided Presidential contest, twice as many votes as they had given Lincoln. When full-scale hostilities got under way, the Los Angeles Star dared to call the War "unholy and unjust" and held Lincoln responsible for it. So high was the feeling for the Stars and Bars that a Confederate training camp was opened in El Monte.

While Union sympathizers faced strong opposition, they had forces of power and money strongly on their side. One of these was Phineas Banning, the enterprising merchant who had acquired a lumber yard, warehouses, wharves and steamships while he had been consolidating stage lines between the cities of Wilmington, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Yuma. Banning and Benjamin D. Wilson, another Loyalist, offered the United States Government two large parcels of land for an army post that would save Southern California for the Union. Banning's offer was accepted and in 1862 army engineers began constructing permanent buildings from mill work pre-cut in New England and sent by ship around Cape Horn.

In the next year or so, twenty-two buildings were completed for officers and enlisted men. Old photographs, however, give the impression that most of the men encamped there during the war lived in tents.

Drum Barracks, named for the commanding general, Richard Coulter Drum, served not only as a large supply depot for the Federal Army in the Southwest, but also as a base of operations for occasional raids on centers of Confederate sympathy. In December of 1863, it was here that orders were given for the invasion of Santa Catalina Island, suspected of harboring smugglers as well as being a potential Confederate naval base. The eighty-three men involved in the assault met no resistance and put the island under martial law, though after running into supply problems, they soon had to withdraw leaving the island to the supposed enemy.

From the Drum Barracks, parties were also sent to pacify marauding Indians, though by this time the danger from Indians was diminishing in the California area. From all reports, the greatest threat to the post were the camels which, with fitting irony, had been purchased by Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, in 1857, for the purpose of supplying army posts in the southwest. Apparently, when their patron defected to the Confederacy and became its President, the camels' loyalties

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were similarly directed, for the stories of their deceit in biting Union soldiers and committing other nuisances are legion in the annals of the Army. Occasionally the camels deserted to the desert where one was seen as late as 1894. The rest were sold at auction after the War was over.

While the post was garrisoned, the activity contributed greatly to the economic life of Wilmington which in turn suffered at the end of hostilities. After the War, the need for the post was gone and soon the troops were withdrawn, whereupon the property reverted to the donor, Phineas Banning. Eventually the buildings were sold to Benjamin Wilson who intended to use them as the nucleus of a college carrying his name. The venture came to nothing. The buildings deteriorated, burned or were demolished, so that by the turn of the century little remained of the Civil War relic.

Among the main buildings the only survivor was the Officers' Quarters which was purchased (c. 1911) by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Keaveney from T. S. Cary who had acquired it a short time before. Mr. Keaveney was an amateur historian of California lore and did what he could to preserve the structure and furnished it with mementos. He also gathered information on the building.

Today the Officers' Quarters, owned by Thomas J. Kaveney, a nephew of the historian, is unoccupied. Recently a community sponsored society for the Preservation of Drum Barracks has been formed, supported by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce and the Long Beach Historical Society, with the intention of buying the landmark and developing it as a headquarters and museum of Civil War history.

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2. Greg Lockett, "The Drum Barracks - Headquarters, Department of the Southwest", term paper written at the Woodrow Wilson High School, December 12, 1963.
3. "Thousands See Drum Barracks", Wilmington Press, September 23, 1933, p. 2.
4. Herman Wrede, "An Outpost of the Union", Wilmington Herald-American, June 8, 1961.

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5. HABS Report, Prepared by Fred L. Friedman, AIA, and Raymond Girvigian, AIA, Preservation Officer, Southern California Chapter, AIA, February 1964.

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2. Maymie Krythe, "Port Admiral-Phineas Banning", California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1957.
3. Aurora Hunt, "Army of the Pacific", Arthur H. Clark Company, Glendale, 1951.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following material is based on various published accounts, an interview with Thomas J. Kaveney* (nephew and heir of Thomas F. and Mary Keaveny, the owners who acquired the property about 1911) and by detailed inspection of the premises in August of 1965.

* Note that the spelling of Thomas Kaveney, the nephew, differs from that of his uncle's surname which is spelled Keaveny, and that he was raised in this structure from the time shortly after his uncle acquired it.

EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions - This well preserved, Greek Revival structure is approximately 60'-0" x 87'-0" long.

Wall Construction - Wood stud, (assumed-balloon framing) with white painted exterior clapboard siding, resting on exposed brick foundations about 24" above grade. Continuous drip boards at the base of the siding employ two horizontal pieces, the top board having a 7" exposed width and the lower a 10" exposed width. Interior finish is plaster on wood lath. Plain flat vertical boards cover the clapboards abutting at the exterior corners.

Porches - The well-proportioned front porch (11' x 24') on the main east elevation is the most prominent architectural feature. The floor, reached by three wooden steps, is framed in wood having 1 x 3, T&G planks on raised joists. A wood railing is composed of turned wood ballusters. Four wood posts, 6 x 6, have elaborately decorated wood bracket caps, featuring open scroll work. Above these caps is a wood architrave which supports projecting wood brackets on which rest the eave of the porch roof and is bounded on three sides by a wood railing having short balluster posts topped with ornamental wood spheres. A simple uncovered "U" shaped veranda 40" wide extends around the west rear patio with a 30" high wood railing. An exterior covered porch at the rear hallway entrance was added about 1912 or 13 - according to Mr. Kaveney.¹

Chimneys - Brick, extending up from the front rooms, serving fireplaces on both floors and arranged symmetrically, one on each side of the building. An early photo shows corbelled brick caps on both chimneys.

Doorways and Doors - East front doors at the porch are paired, grouped symmetrically about the centerline, each leading to a long hallway. Each entrance door is flanked on both sides by a sidelight and has a fixed transom light above. Over each entrance is a plain wooden pediment. Each rear door, leading from the hallway to the west porch, is wood paneled in the lower half and has glass lights divided with 6 horizontal panes in the upper half. Frames are of painted softwood with applied stops and plain wood casings.

Windows - Grouped in pairs at each floor (east elevation) symmetrically about the front porch, the typical double hung, softwood frame windows are divided into six panes on the upper and six on the lower halves, flanked with painted, wooden louvered shutters and have plain wood pediments above similar to the doors.

Roofs - Wood framed, hipped rafters, accented with wood ridge boards, finished with split cypress shingles and secured with cut nails. The lower roofs over the single story rear wings, are low pitched and have hipped ends at the west elevation. The eaves at the second story portion have a modest overhang supported by scroll form, ornamental wood brackets - spaced at about 5'-0" c.c. with simple, rectangular wood coffered patterns at the eave soffits between each bracket.

Cornice - The perimeter of the second story roof is bounded by a wooden fascia having a wooden ogee curve molding. A frieze between brackets is composed of simple rectangular, recessed panels.

Miscellaneous - According to Mr. Kaveney ¹, the Solarium seen at the southeast corner of the building was added by his uncle about 1924 or 25. Except for the rear covered porch, which he also indicated was an addition, the Officer's Quarters is remarkably well preserved from the exterior both to its physical condition as well as to resembling its original appearance. Most of the millwork materials for the Barracks were ready-cut and shipped via the Horn; only the Powder House which still remains was constructed from local materials.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan - The building is oriented with its long axis in an east-west direction, and the floor plan symmetrical about its centerline. The eastern portion of the building is two stories in height, two identical one-story wings project to the west or rear, enclosing a small "U" shaped patio, open at the western end. At the center of the building extending from the front porch to the rear porch, are two side by side identical halls, separated by a party wall, with stairways leading to the second

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floor. Each half of the first floor contains two rooms 20' x 20' with 14' high ceilings. The front room on each side has a fireplace. These rooms, together with the service rooms beyond (which are in the single story wings) formed quarters for officers with families. The hallways lead to two identical rooms above on the second floor, but without the service rooms in the westerly wings. These served as single officer's quarters.¹

Flooring - 1" x $5\frac{1}{4}$ " pine planks, random cut, over wood sheathing and wood joist framing.

Walls - Wood stud, lath and $5/8$ " plaster - presently finished with paper, origin unknown; finished wall thickness approximately 8" overall.

Doorways and Doors - Painted softwood frames and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick doors, paneled with a pair of small recessed panels below the knob and a pair of long, vertical recessed panels above the knob with beaded molding. Interior doors between main rooms are 6'-9- $3/4$ " with $2\frac{1}{4}$ " thick horizontal transom rails above which is a fixed glass transom, center divided and 1'-3" in height, having a delicately etched, diamond pattern. The softwood casing is $6\frac{1}{2}$ " wide by 1- $3/4$ " thick, having four milled surfaces varying in width: 1", 2", 2" and 1- $3/4$ " from exterior to interior edge, respectively.

Base - Approximately 1" x $9\frac{1}{2}$ ", plain softwood.

Ceilings - Height is approximately 14'-0", plaster finished with no cove and presently finished with sanitas paper. A wood cornice mold runs horizontally, 9'-7" above the floor in the first floor kitchens.

Fireplaces - Each of the front rooms of both floors has a fireplace (one stacked over the other - four in all) with 9" projecting wood mantels, 2" radius corners, approximately 4'-0" high and a pair of squat, wooden classic type pilasters flanking the brick opening. The brick hearth (original) is a red-violet shade versus the common red brick of the finished trim around the opening. A cast iron lintel supports the head of the opening, the brick facing of which

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appears to be a later alteration. It is said that the original fireplace facing was marble adorned with United States Eagles, the latter also decorated the andirons ², (no longer in evidence).

Stairways - Two identical stairs in the side by side hallways are of wood and notable for their polished mahogany newel posts, ballusters and railings which curve around the landings at the tops of the stairs.

Hardware - Much of the original hardware appears to remain and is typically double bladed, strap metal, hand wrought butts with loose pins. Door knobs are painted porcelain. Latch sets are mortised and cast iron knockers are found on the exterior of the principal doors leading from the hallways to the front rooms.

Miscellaneous - Some interior partitions, as pointed out by Mr. Kaveney, were later additions. For instance, as at the Solarium on the south side of the first floor which was indicated as a 1941 change. Screen walls have been added at the upstairs halls. One source indicates that as late as 1955 many articles of the early days could still be seen, such as spacious stairs, finely carved cabinets, old andirons, door scrapers and the old ship's lantern that formerly hung from the Fort.³ Most of these as well as the original kerosene fixtures and an entrance hall chandelier from which each person lifted a burning candle to light the way to his room can no longer be found.

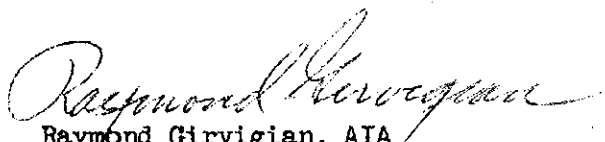
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2. HABSI-DRUM BARRACKS, Fred L. Friedman, AIA, and Raymond Girvigian, AIA, Library of Congress, CAL-353, February 1964.
3. Historic Landmarks in Los Angeles County, Prepared and Published by Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, January 1956, pp. 65-66.

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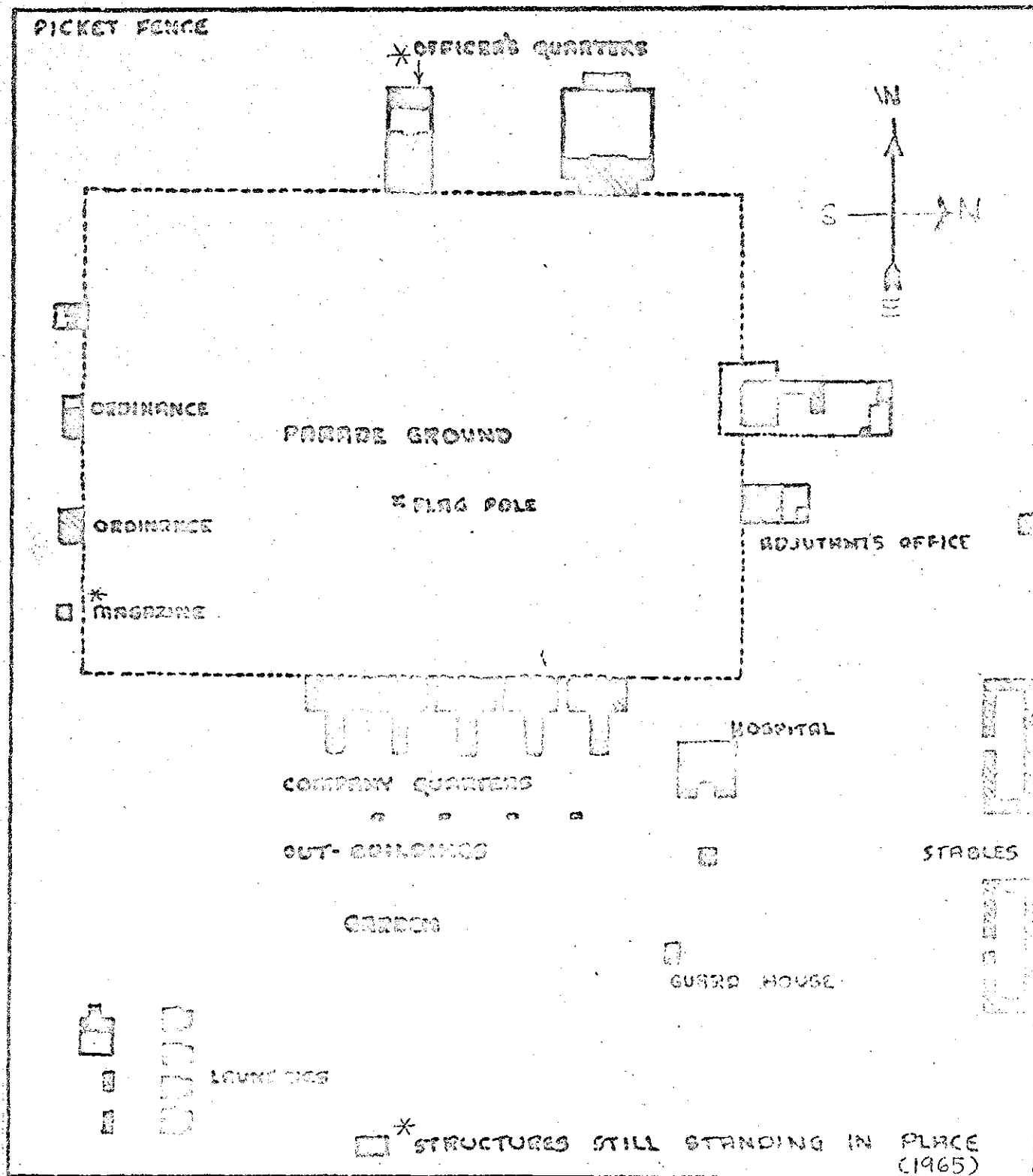
September 1965

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National Park Service

DATE: October 1965

The Drum Barracks.

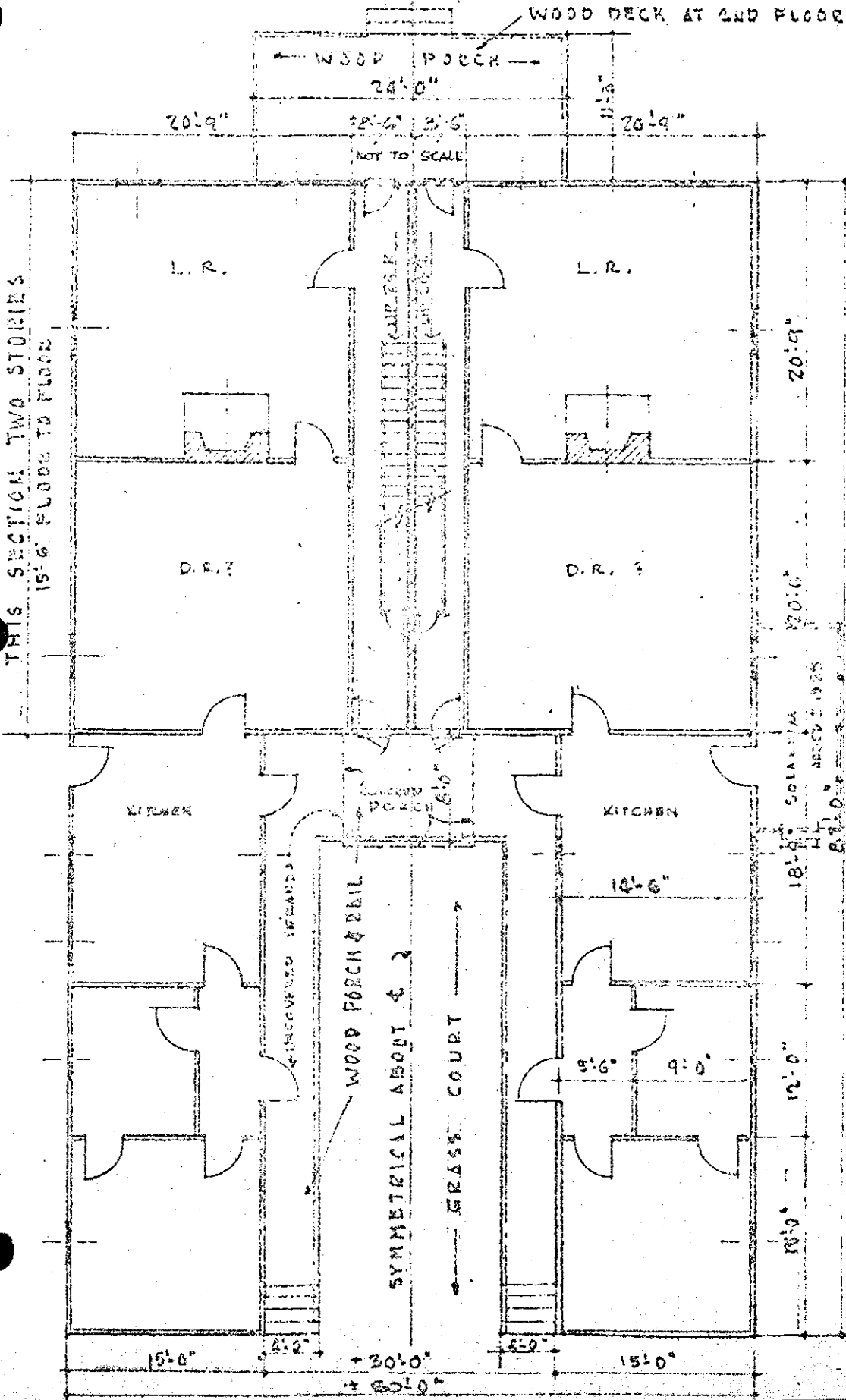
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Copy of map from: "The Drum Barracks-Headquarters, Department of the Southwest," a report by Greg Lockett, Woodrow Wilson High School, Long Beach, Calif. 12/9/63

ONE INCH EQUALS 200 FEET

THIS SECTION TWO STORES
15' 6" FLOOR TO FLOOR



DRUM BARRACKS - WILMINGTON, CALIF.

FIELD MEASUREMENTS - SCALE - $\frac{3}{4}$ " = 1'-0"

FLOOR PLAN PREPARED BY: A. SYLVANUS AUG 7, 1965

SUBMITTED BY: RAYMOND GIVIGIAN, AIA, PRESERVATION OFFICER
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, THE A.I.A.

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